



# We Do Explode: Anger

## Moderating Your Reactions

<http://www.soyunica.gov/adults/granwisdom/anger.aspx>

I imagine that more than once, you have felt so frustrated that you had a tremendous urge to scream. Just like other times, you have been so angry and upset inside that you felt like a volcano about to erupt. We all feel this way at times. It's normal, so don't be alarmed.

I remember the day that my brother Fernando was getting married. I was just 16 years old and I was so happy, because I was going to wear a beautiful blue dress my mother had made for me. A month ahead of time we took my shoes in to be dyed to match. I was going to be a hit at the party; I was sure everyone would admire me.

Well, the shoe store called a few days before the wedding to say they would not be able to have them ready by that Saturday. My cousin Nibaldo took the message but he forgot to tell me. When I heard the bad news I thought I would die of rage; I cried for hours out of desperation.

Of course not having those shoes wasn't the end of the world. Thank goodness my mother solved the problem by dyeing them herself. But I was still terribly angry. My brother and my cousin thought that I had blown the incident out of proportion.

As you see, anger is a very strong emotion, especially when something we really want doesn't work out. What's important is to realize that you were overreacting, and to try to think about people around you and what they are going through.

### Forgiving Yourself

If you don't forgive yourself, over time your resentment will grow and take over. This is bad because you won't be able to control your behavior or the words you use. The worst part is that you will hurt yourself and the people you love the most.

Managing anger takes skill, strength, and practice. When you get angry, remember that you have a right to feel that way, but try to find out why you are really angry.

Try to get to the "heart of the matter," to be able to deal better with your pain and anger. For instance, if you find yourself frustrated with the twenty people ahead of you in line at the supermarket, think... maybe the real problem is something that happened at home that morning.

Don't try to suppress your anger or pretend that you are not mad either. That is worse. I have already said that it is dangerous to deny your feelings, because if you bottle them up, you will finally "explode," hurting yourself and others as well.

You need to know your options. There aren't any magic formulas to control anger. I fell into a vicious cycle of reacting hastily when I was angry. Of course, I have come to regret the things I did.

The best way not to repeat our mistakes is to stop punishing and tormenting ourselves with "I should have..." or "If only I had..." The most important thing is to forgive yourself and in the future, resolve the problem differently.

## **Staying Calm**

When you want to show that you are angry, don't use offensive words. You will only embarrass yourself and look bad. You must calmly indicate what you really want. I will humbly tell you what has worked for me.

By asking myself these simple questions, I have managed to acknowledge my feelings. Try to answer them and look at the things that bother you.

What makes you furious:

- At yourself?
- At your children?
- At your partner?
- At your family?
- At work?

Once you understand why you are angry, go back and talk to the individual or people who made you angry and try to resolve the situation. By staying calm, you will be better able to express your feelings and the reason for your anger in a firm but civilized way, without blaming anyone or being aggressive.

Remember, like many things in life, we have to practice the way we express ourselves and control our feelings. This requires time and patience. When you succeed, you will see your relationships with your family and friends improve. We change things with affection, not anger.